

29 March 1968

Dear General Gehlen,

Ruth joins me in wishing you a most happy birthday anniversary. We hope you will be able to enjoy it in good health and with most of your family present.

The years fly by and I find it difficult to realize that you will be retiring from your august position as President. It just does not seem possible that an era is coming to an end. Your complete and total identification with your Service ever since you founded it has, of course, been recognized but it has been such that one sort of expects you to always be associated with the Service.

It must be personally gratifying to note that no other intelligence service chief has occupied such a position for so long a period as you. I am certain that despite the fact that your choice of a successor actually came to pass, there must have been many heavy hearts within your organization when it was announced that you would be leaving. Having been closely associated with so many of your employees, particularly during my five years in Germany, I think I can sense the feeling of loss that must have pervaded your organization.

I am sure that your contacts with your Service will not cease and that your valuable experience will still be available.

Ruth and I hope that you will be truly happy in whatever pursuits you now decide to follow. And I certainly trust that you will be able to spend much more time in your favorite sport -- sailing.

Again, all best wishes to you and your family.

Most sincerely,

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